ruinous if attained, and are the suggestions of ignorance if not of evil design.

That the condition of the working classes may be greatly and permanently improved is our earnest prayer: the completest hindrance to it would be anarchy and misrule.

LANDAFF CATHEDRAL.

ITS HISTORY, CONDITION, AND CONTEMPLATED RESTORATION.*

I have always felt that the real objects of the Institute of Architects could, in no way, be more effectively advanced than in communicating the particulars of any large or interesting works upon which we may be professionally engaged, and thus whilst conveying "local" information, obtain for any doubtful point in construction or arrangement, the advantages of that wisdom which some believe to dwell in a "multitude of counsellors." With these feelings, I have thought that you might be interested, and the work be benefitted by a short paper upon the history, condition, and contemplated restoration of Landaff Cathedral.

Upon the history of the cathedral, I shall not detain you at any great length. The data and documents upon which an archæological discussion could be based, are so scanty and unsatisfactory, that at best the inquiry would result in mere conjecture. I have referred to all those works which I thought would throw light on the subject, but without obtaining any satisfactory evidence as to the gradation by which this cathedral was brought to completion. The scanty information afforded by the old writers has, however, the rare charm of considerable unanimity. They all agree that the See of Landaff is one of the oldest in the kingdom, honoured, as Wotton says, "by being the ancientest see in the kingdom, as we have evident authority to shew." The first bishop is stated to have been "Dubritius," who died in 522, on an island off the Caernarvonshire coast, and whose bones were in 1120 translated to Landaff by Bishop Urban, the founder of the present cathedral. Dugdale, in his "Monasticon," says, "There is much of uncertainty in the history of Landaff, as well in relation to its see as to its bishops, till the latter end of the ninth century; but he adds that, "Dubritius was consecrated the first archbishop of Wales, sitting sometimes at Caerleon and sometimes at Landaff, for which reason he is reckoned the first bishop of the latter see."

In 1091, "The Normans, who were early settled in this district under Fitzhamon, seized all the lands of the district: the church was almost levelled to the ground, and the revenues so confiscated, that out of twenty-four canons it could not maintain two."

Urban was consecrated the thirtieth bishop of Landaff in 1107: and to him all concede the honour of having founded the present cathedral. "At his first coming, he found his bishopric in a very poor and miserable condition,—the church razed almost to the ground; and complaining thereof to the King and the Pope in 1119, he procured letters and gathered large sums together; he pulled down the old church, which was but 28 feet long, 15 feet broad, and 20 feet high; and in 1120, according to Leland and Godwin,—or in 1129, as stated by Dugdale,—he commenced the fabric dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. Bishop Godwin (who wrote in 1601) describes this building as "a very elegant one, 300 feet long, 90 feet broad, and adorned at the west end with two stately towers of great height, and a neat chapel of our Ladye: a work truly magnificent, and to be remembered with honour by posterity." Urban died in 1133, travelling towards Rome. From this period to the beginning of the last century there is no further record of any kind that I can find relating to the cathedral, and here conjecture must commence.

If Bishop Godwin be correct in supposing the church commenced by Urban to have been completed by him with two towers and a Ladye Chapel, and to have been 300 feet long, it must have disappeared between the period of his death, 1134, and 1180 or 1190, which will, I think, be conceded as the earliest date at which the present Early English structure could have been commenced. The extreme length of the present building is only 260 feet, and its breadth 76 feet. Of pure Norman work, such as we may believe Urban to have executed in the beginning of the twelfth century, we only have the large arch between the presbytery and Ladye Chapel; the remaining portion of a window on the south side of the presbytery, so curiously stopped up at a later period; portions of a Norman string-course, with a fret ornament, running round the walls of the presbytery (being the string-course of the Norman clerestory); a variety of Norman fragments walled into the presbytery; and the two doors at the west end of the north and south aisles, which, though later in their detail and finish than the large arch, may fairly be considered as of Urban's time, particularly if he commenced at the east end and worked westward toward these doors.

The size of the chancel arch, the importance and decoration of the aisle doors, clearly prove that they could have formed no portion of the early and insignificant church knocked about by the Normans, and eventually demolished by Urban: for although the preservation of doorways and chancel arches of Norman churches, rebuilt in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, is of frequent occurrence, yet in this instance I think they must have originated with Urban and not have been removed or perpetuated by him.

The character and finish of the large arch at the east end of presbytery, clearly proves that it must have opened into a chancel or Ladye chapel: and thus we may believe Urban so far to have realized Godwin's description as to have completed, "a neat chapel of our Ladye." And the existence of pure Norman work, so far westward as the two aisle doors, may be taken as presumptive evidence that Urban completed "a work truly magnificent, and to be remembered with honour by posterity," even if his western towers were fabulous. Certainly these doorways are of rich and beautiful design, and the general character of all the Norman work remaining is of a pure and good period, corresponding with Urban's prelacy. What befel this Norman church, or how it could have been so completely destroyed in the short period between Urban's death in 1180 or 1190, as to have rendered necessary the almost entire rebuilding of the church in a new and distinct style remains a mystery. Whether fire or storm, those destructive agents of so many of our fine ecclesiastical buildings, or the fury of contending factions, achieved this ignoble work, I am at a loss to conjecture; but clear it is, that if Urban's and the Norman work had reached the west end, within the short period of about sixty or seventy years, a new cathedral must have been commenced in a fresh and altered style, and very complete must have been the destruction, or more of Urban's supposed work would have remained. Here are no traces of that gradual and clearly-marked transition from Norman to Early English, which we find so evidently and so instructively displayed at Canterbury, Norwich, Gloucester, St. David's, and Buildwas Abbey. The jump is sudden and somewhat abrupt; no interlacing arches, no clinging to Norman form and even Norman detail, so common down to the beginning of the thirteenth century. With the single exception of the western doorway (in which the circular arch is retained, though the detail of the shafts and mouldings are Early English) the new work was commenced free from any taint or prejudice of a past style, and stands forth as pure and beautiful an example of Early English composition and detail as any with which I am acquainted. An able writer in the "Ecclesiologist" thus speaks of it:—"The exquisite Early English work of this part of the church is truly beautiful; not the least idea is obtained by the wretched drawing given in 'Winkle's Cathedrals.' To stand opposite the western front—itself once a marvel of art—and view through the now vacant and ruinous windows the paganized nave beyond it, with its flat pedimental roof, its ridiculous vases and urns, its stuccoed walls, is inevitably to feel the most forcible contrast between the speaking graces of the Christian and the burlesque absurdities of the revived pagan style."

Mr. Britton has truly observed, and Professor Willis echoes the remark—"It is a favourite maxim with some antiquaries to carry back the date of every church as far as possible, and, like the late Mr. King and Mr. Carter, they do not hesitate to assert peremptorily that the oldest part must be of the age of the first foundation." Now, although the antiquarian writers on this cathedral may not have reached this last stage of archæological disease, some of them have fallen into the error just described, and argue strongly that the Early English work of the cathedral is of Urban's time (that is to say, the beginning of the twelfth century). Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in his edition of "Geraldus Cambrensis," says—"On a careful examination of this cathedral with the abbey of Lanthony, in Monmouthshire, which was built about the same time (1108), and which, though richer in its ornament, bears a great resemblance to Landaff as to general architecture, we have evident proofs that the Saxon and Gothic orders, or round and pointed arches, were adopted indiscriminately to doors and windows in the same building about the beginning of the twelfth century, or 1100." And he adds—"The buildings at Lanthony and Landaff prove that the pointed arch was adopted at a much earlier period than at St. David's (rebuilt in 1180), and had obtained a greater degree of elegance and perfection, the former (Lanthony) erected soon after 1108, the latter (Landaff) in 1120."

Gough, in his "Cambrensis," says,—"The remains of the old cathedral are very beautiful, the door-cases all Norman, richly moulded. The rest elegant Gothic, though built so early."

Now, although from the affinity of England to Wales," where our ancestors sojourned, if not as absolute conquerors, yet as authorised visitors, "we may fairly believe architecture to have been almost on a level in point of date, we can have no reason for imagining that the Welch were some 70 or 80 years in advance of the English in the periods of their architecture, or that the change from the circular to the pointed arch, by us called "Early English," should more properly have been called "Early Welch." If this is allowed, I am unable to believe that any antiquary can assign an earlier date than 1180 or 1190 to the west front and nave of this cathedral; for though it is perfectly impossible to fix with peremptory certainty the exact date when one particular stage or style of art ended and another commenced, yet we find that from the period when the pointed arch first made its appearance and became blended with the Norman semicircle, years elapsed before the newer style or form had shaken off the influence of its predecessor. "For a long time they differed only in form, the general characteristics, the details and accessories of the two arches remaining the same."

We find in numerous instances, as at Gloucester, Canterbury, the Temple Church, and even St. David's Cathedral (so infelicitously quoted by Sir Richard Hoare), that this transitional feeling existed in full force—nay, that the Norman preponderated—although the portions I allude to are well known to date about the end of the twelfth century. You will, I think, share my disbelief in the theory that the pure and pointed work at Landaff could have been commenced sixty or seventy years before the Norman arch had elsewhere ceased to prevail. In Buildwas Abbey, which is one of the earliest transition works I know (the date of which is stated to be about 1135), the indication of Early English form or feeling is very slight. In the section of one of the bays of the nave of St. David's Cathedral, built in 1180, you find the only Early English work consists of a small arcade, between two series of clearly defined Norman arches!—certainly not a very convincing proof that Early English work was in existence in the sister cathedral of South Wales sixty years before this work was commenced.* I have, upon this point, trespassed largely upon your patience, but I think it both

* Read at a meeting of the Royal Institute of Architects.

* With reference to Lanthony Abbey, it is clearly a transitional building. The west front principally Early English; internally, the Norman arch and detail is freely mixed with the Pointed arch. In the additions to Gough's "Camden," it is stated, "that the present ruin of Lanthony Abbey was not the *original* church belonging to the abbey, founded in 1136, but is of *later date*, being constructed a son after the introduction of the pointed style, and previous to its general adoption, for both that and the circular are exemplified in its construction, and appear to have entered into the original plan." This is perfectly clear, but does little for Sir Richard Hoare's argument.

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